

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT

Monday, 13th December, 2021

MEDICAL INTERNS ISSUE INTENTION TO SUE OVER MINISTRY OF HEALTH DIRECTIVE

Kampala – Uganda. Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) on behalf of the Uganda Medical Association (UMA) and the Federation for Uganda Medical Interns (FUMI), has issued a notice of the intention to sue in response to the Ministry of Health's directive for medical interns to vacate hospital premises. UMA and FUMI are exercising a constitutional right to carry out industrial action geared at resolving the challenges faced in the day-to-day execution of their work, training, service delivery and welfare. The challenges range from lack of proper supervision, lack of accommodation, poor remuneration and poor working environment, among others.

By virtue of their appointment by the Ministry of Health, medical interns play a vital role as frontline workers in this era of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is therefore inconceivable that the Ministry of Health has resorted to illegally denying the medical interns their constitutional right to practice their trade and complete their medical training.

On 9th August 2021, His Excellency The President of Republic of Uganda following a meeting with the leadership of UMA, directed that the Government addresses the challenges of UMA and FUMI by, among others, enhancing the remuneration of the medical interns.

Unfortunately, instead of fast-tracking the implementation of the presidential directives aimed at resolving the grievances that led to the strike, the Ministry of Health has resorted to irregular, unorthodox and unconstitutional means of resolving a lawful industrial action. Directing medical interns on strike to vacate the hospital premises within one week is not only unacceptable and unjustifiable in a free and democratic society like Uganda, it is also a callous decision.

In light of this, we point out that the directive does not only undermine constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms of medical interns, it also offends the Directive/ Guidance by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda. These actions are also irregular, illegal, arbitrary, high handed and certainly challengeable in the Civil Courts of Law.

Call to action

We call upon the Ministry of Health to recall the directive to the medical interns to leave their stations within two days or else we risk creating a crisis in the delivery of health services.

Find a copy of this letter attached.

About CEHURD

The Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) is an indigenous, non-profit, research and advocacy organisation which is pioneering the enforcement of human rights and the justiciability of the right to health in Eastern Africa.

For more information contact: info@cehurd.org and copy in kenganzi@cehurd.org or call +256 778 723 449



CEHURD
social justice in health

CENTER FOR HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Plot 4008 Justice Road, Canaan sites, Nakwero Gayaza-Kalagi Road
P.O, Box 16617 Wandegaya, Tel: 0414 532283 Email: info@cehurd.org
website: www.cehurd.org, Toll free line: 0800 300 044

Legal Aid Clinic

CEHURD/ADMIN/12/36

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

13th December, 2021

Date:.....



The Director General Health Services,
Ministry of Health,
Plot 6, Lourdel Road, Wandegaya,
P.O.BOX 7272,
KAMPALA.



*Received PPS
Amunim Bg
13/12/2021*

Attention: Dr. Henry G. Mwebesa

Dear Sir;

RE: DIRECTIVE ON VACATION OF HOSPITAL PREMISES BY MEDICAL INTERNS

The above refers;

We act for and on behalf of Uganda Medical Association and Federation for Uganda Medical Interns (FUMI) on whose brief we appraise you as hereunder;

Your correspondence dated 10th December 2021 vide Reference No. ADM.170/264/01 addressed to all Hospital Directors/ Medical Superintendents in respect to the captioned matter has been placed into our hands with instructions to appraise you as hereunder;

Our clients; Uganda Medical Association and the Federation for Uganda Medical Interns (FUMI) are exercising a constitutional right to an industrial action geared at resolving the challenges faced in the day-to-day execution of their work, training, service delivery and their welfare. The challenges range from lack of proper supervision, lack of accommodation, poor remuneration, poor relationship with the Ministry of Health and poor working environment among others.

By virtue of their appointment by the Ministry of Health, medical interns play a vital role as frontline workers in this era of Covid 19 pandemic and it is inconceivable that the Ministry of Health has resorted to illegally denying the medical interns their constitutional right to complete medical training instead of liaising with respective institutions/agencies to address their demands.

You also recall that on 9th August 2021, His Excellency The President of Republic of Uganda following a meeting with the Leadership of our Clients directed that Government addresses the challenges of our clients by among others enhancing the remuneration of the Medical Interns. *(A copy of the Letter by the President is hereto attached).*



Unfortunately, however, instead of fast-tracking the implementation of the Directive of His Excellency The President, aimed at resolving one of the grievances that led to the Industrial action by the Doctors and Medical Interns, you have resorted to irregular, unorthodox and unconstitutional means of resolving a lawful industrial action by directing Medical Interns on strike to vacate the Hospital Premises within one week which is unacceptable and not justifiable in a free and democratic society in Uganda. **what a callous a decision.**

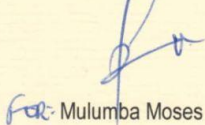
In light of this therefore, we caution you that your directive does not only undermine constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights and freedoms of medical interns, it also offends the Directive/ Guidance by His Excellency the President of Republic of Uganda. Your actions are also irregular, illegal, arbitrary, high handed and certainly challengeable in the Civil Courts of Law.

By this Correspondence, you are hereby requested to recall the said directive within a period of two days from the date hereof failure of which our instructions are to seek redress from the Courts of Law.

By a copy of this Letter the Hon. Attorney General of the Government of Uganda is put to notice of our Clients' intention to sue if the said irregular and illegal directive by yourself is not recalled with the time herein.

Thank you,

Yours Sincerely;


Mulumba Moses

Executive Director

For: CEHURD Legal Aid Clinic

C.c Rt. Hon. Prime Minister
C.c Attorney General
C.c Minister of Health
C.c Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health,
C.c Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Service
C.c Principle Private Secretary to the HE, the President
C.c Clients



TEL: 25691
FAX: 25691
EMAIL: info@president.gov.ug

IN ANY CORRESPONDENCE ON
THIS SUBJECT PLEASE QUOTE NO. **PO/3**



State House,
P. O. Box 25497,
Kampala,
Uganda.

9th August, 2021

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
KAMPALA

RE: INCREMENT OF PAY FOR MEDICAL INTERNS

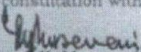
The above subject matter refers.

I recently held a meeting with the leadership of Uganda Medical Association (UMA), Federation of Uganda Medical Interns (FUMI), attended by the officials of the Ministries of Health and Finance, Planning and Economic Development, in regards to medical training and welfare of medical interns in Uganda.

It was noted, that medical interns (medical doctors, dental surgeons, pharmacists, graduate nurses and midwives) earn a net pay of **UGX 750,000/=** which is not enough to meet basic needs. Most of them are not housed and live in rented unsafe locations distant from the training hospitals; they are not provided with meals and have to buy and cook their own food; yet they work 24/7 and have no time to cook.

It is, against this background, that I recommended that all medical interns be paid half of the "recommended" pay of the fully appointed officers in the respective professions starting July 2021. For intern doctors, this should be **UGX 2,500,000** i.e. half of **UGX 5,000,000** a medical officer is to earn. Graduate Nurses, midwives and pharmacists should also earn half of the recommended pay of the respective officers.

In this regard, I am, therefore, directing you to implement this resolution in consultation with the ministry of Health and Finance.


Yoweri K. Museveni
PRESIDENT

Copy to: H.E. the Vice President
Minister of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development
Minister of Health
Minister of Public Service
President Uganda Medical Association
President Federation of Uganda Medical Interns